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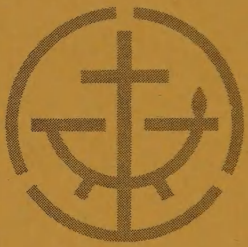
Maori Tales



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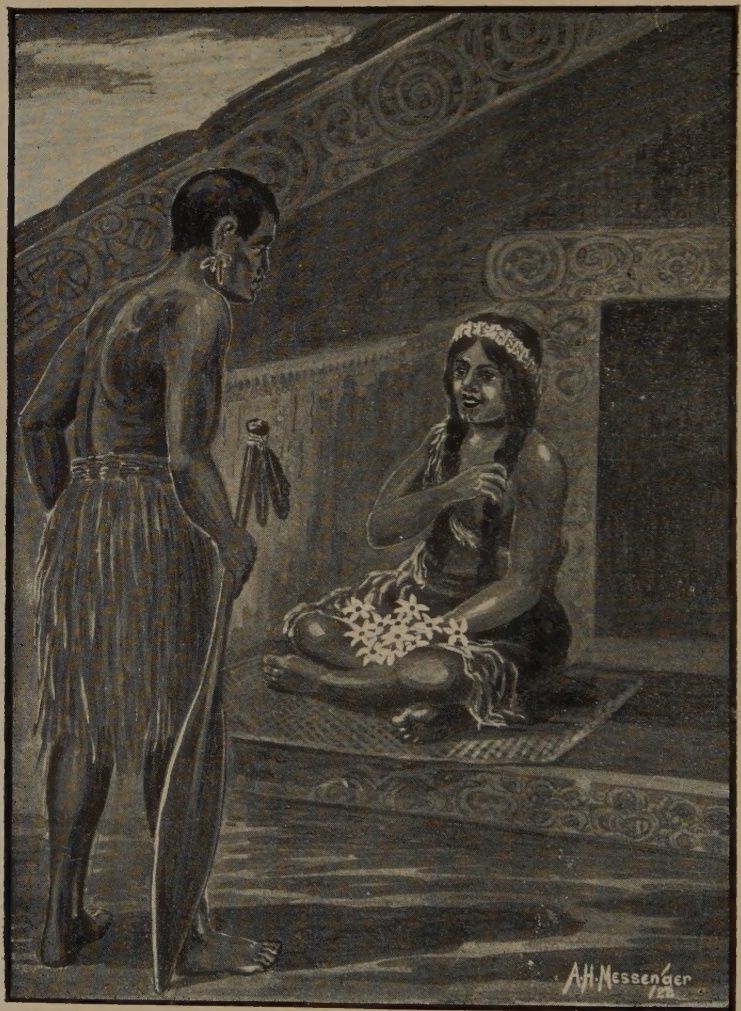

"I am Roa herself."

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Maori Tales

BY

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"Jubilee History of South Canterbury," "Maori Life in Ao-tea,"
"Songs Unsung." etc.

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The Hill Fairies

They live high up in the hills, choosing the very densest parts of the bush for their dwelling, and the palisades of their hidden villages are woven of black supplejack vines. Sometimes their distant singing may be heard; and sometimes they come down close to the Maori villages, and even carry off women and girls who stray too far among the trees.

The beautiful wife of Rua-rangi had been tempted one summer day to wander up the ferny stream, each bend seeming to entice her more, when suddenly she was surrounded by a band of roving hill-fairies; and their chief taking a great fancy to her, she was carried off to the hills.

The fairies were kind to her, and for some time she was quite happy with the singing creatures, who permitted her to roam at liberty about the village, giving her everything she desired, except permission to go beyond the palisades. Feeling a longing

"She was surrounded by a band of roving hill fairies."

for her Maori husband swelling in her heart, however, day by day she sought a means of escape. She would venture first to the gate; then a little beyond; then a little further; till the fairies became accustomed to seeing her outside the palisades.

"Oh, she has altogether forgotten her people," said they; "she always comes back, and is quite happy with her fairy husband."

It will be supposed that Rua-rangi was greatly concerned when he came home from hunting and found that his beautiful wife had disappeared. Days passed, and she did not return. She had been seen wandering into the bush, and the tohunga, or wise man of the village, at last discovered that she had been carried off by the fairies. He murmured charms to cause a longing for her Maori husband to enter her heart, and his charms were not without effect.

The husband, too, sent a messenger of love, in the shape of a warbling tom-tit; and one day the longing wife, having come some distance beyond the palisades, saw the tiny bird alight close beside her, and heard

"She heard its gentle warbling."

its gentle warbling. She knew it to be a message from her husband, and now her love urged her feet, and she hastened away from the fairy village, hastened away to her Maori husband. She did not dare to look back for fear the fairy watchmen should see her, but hurried through the brakes of supplejack and brambly thickets, under the great trees, over mossy rocks and past tumbling singing waters.

Soon she saw her husband, who had come to meet her, and together they sped, faster and faster, for now they heard the cries of the pursuing fairies. They had discovered her escape, and with their sorrowful chief had hastened to recapture her.

The woman and her husband reached the village just as the fairies reached the edge of the bush, and they were safe, for the palisades of the village had been smeared with red, a colour the fairies could not endure, and the tohunga was repeating powerful incantations to deprive the fairies of power to come nearer, or to take the woman away.

The chief of the fairies, too, stood repeating incantations, but his were of less power, and without effect ; and before long the fairies were seen returning dejectedly to the bush, lamenting the loss of the lovely wife of Rua-rangi.

The Murmur of the Shell

The Murmur of the Shell

Honi was among the young people whose tribe had paid a visit to the tribe of Rau-huia. To be sure, he was an expert wrestler and thrower of the spear, and excelled in all youthful sports; he was also good-looking, and the heart of Rau-huia warmed when she thought of him;—but of what use was all this?—he was her inferior in rank, and would never be allowed to take her as his wife; and besides, he had gone away with his tribe, and had never even told her that he loved her. No; but love has other speech than that of the lips, and his eyes had not been silent.

The kowhai had flowered and fallen, and the white clematis was hanging its garlands in the trees; the shining cuckoo was beginning its call of *kui, kui, kui,* and the tui was sounding his love-song. All this tingled the heart of Rau-huia, and her eyes grew dim as she thought of Honi. Did he care at all, away there beyond the bush?—She wondered.

She was walking slowly along the beach, the waves washing up shells and broken weed. She saw a rare white shell, and hastened to pick it up ; but its lip was broken, and she threw it back into the sea. Again she saw a rare white shell, again picked it up, but it was the same one, and impatiently she again threw it into the sea. A third time the shell was washed up, and she was about to crush it when she seemed to hear a murmur coming from the broken lip. She held it to her ear, and her heart beat faster when she heard the voice of Honi, the voice of her lover.

" Is it true ? " she said as she listened ; " is it true that he loves me ? "

The voice in the shell assured her that it was true ; and it urged her, if she loved Honi, to leave her home and come to him, since he might not come to her.

" But I do not know the way," she objected, as her heart urged her ; "I do not know the paths through the bush, do not know where to find him."

She kept the shell, and all day it murmured, but only to her ; all night it murmured, as she lay restless, not knowing what to do.

"She heard the voice of Honi."

With the light of day came courage ; and she thought, " If he could send me word to come to him, he can also direct my feet the way they should go " ; and unobserved she slipped away, entering the bush fearlessly, and going on and on.

At mid-day she was still in the bush, light of heart and unafraid. She laughed to hear the tui, making his wise remarks as he sang scraps of song ; she chattered in reply to the cheerful whiteheads, moving in noisy flocks about her ; she greeted the watchful robins, and mocked the noisy kaka. All were singing or screeching as the sun was dropping to the west ; and in the midst of it Rau-huia began to be apprehensive, for the bush was still dense, and there was no pathway to guide her.

Shadows began to creep from the shaded depths ; she hurried, but hurrying helped her little, for she stumbled over roots, and fallen boughs, and must go cautiously, and her breast began to sob, more through coming fear than breathlessness. Soon her heart started to hear the mournful cry of a more-pork. A dread took her ; she was caught by

the night in the lonely bush,—and imagination began to people it with terrors.

She reached a more open space, but all around looked dark and forbidding: she could go no further, and tears began to dim her eyes. She crouched on a mound of dry leaves between the roots of a great totara and drew her cloak about her, her ears straining to catch every sound, and the darkening bush was full of them.

She heard a voice,—surely the voice of a maero, the wild man of the woods;—she caught a glimpse of the faint glow of a newly-lit fire. She looked, half in hope and half in fear,—it was no maero, but a traveller like herself.

Who was the stranger?—she shrank back when she thought he might be quite unknown to her;—as well might she have met a maero. But fear of the night urged her nearer and nearer to the fire. She could not see the man's face; his back was towards her. Fear both urged her on, and held her back. A dry stick cracked under her foot;—the man sprang to his feet, grasping his weapon.

He saw her, seized her, dragged her to the fire. She cowered under his hand. "Who

are you ? " he asked. The voice was the voice of the shell ; she looked up timidly. The fire shone on his face,—her fears melted away, her heart sang, and she answered softly,—" I, Honi !—I am glad it was you who found me."

The Winning of Roa

The Winning of Roa

The fame of the beauty of Roa had gone far beyond her own village, and she was the desire of every young man, and the envy of every young woman, near and far. But she was of high rank also, so few might hope for her favour.

The brothers Ruru one day talked together. "Why should not one of us win her for his wife? We will pay a visit to her village, and see if this white crane cannot be captured." Each of the brothers resolved that he was to be the successful one, and they launched their canoe, and set out on their journey. Ruru-teina was the youngest; he heard the boasting of his brothers, but said nothing; for what had the youngest to say in a matter where his elders had expressed desire?

Roa, too, heard of the boasting; for a boast is a noisy bird that flies far and knows no shame. She determined to deceive the brothers, and instructed some of her best-

looking attendants how they should act. When the brothers reached the village she herself would remain in her house, whilst each of the attendants was to persuade one of the brothers that she was Roa, and that he had won her heart.

The brothers arrived, and the company was welcomed to the open court, where speeches and songs were interchanged. The brothers' eyes were meanwhile busy scanning the maidens, wondering which one might be Roa, the celebrated beauty. Before evening, they said to Ruru-teina,

"Do you now return to our canoe and watch during the night so that our goods may be safe"; and reluctantly Ruru-teina returned to the canoe, which had been hauled well up the beach beyond reach of the tide.

There he sat, meditating on the good fortune of his brothers. There they would be enjoying themselves in the meeting-houses, singing, dancing, reciting tales, playing games, and here was he, hearing, seeing, and doing nothing. It was not to be thought of. He wandered a little way from the canoe, and saw some boys whipping tops. "E hoa ma!" he cried; "friends!—where is the

house of Roanga-rahia ? "—for that was the full name of Roa.

" Yonder," said they, pointing out a well-carved house not so very far from the canoe.

Ruru walked slowly along to the house ; he might at least see her home if he might not see Roa herself.

A pleasant-looking young woman was seated by the doorway.

" Is this the house of Roanga-rahia ? " asked Ruru.

" Yes," was the reply ; " Are not you one of the visitors ? "

Ruru admitted that he was.

" Why are not you with the others, so that you might win Roa for your wife ? "

" Oh," said Ruru ; " I am the youngest, and was sent to watch the canoe, whilst my brothers win Roa ; for every one of them has determined to do so."

The young woman laughed. She was indeed so pleasant, and so good-looking too, that Ruru quickly forgot his disappointment, and forgot the canoe too as they chatted away together.

They had taken a great liking to each other ; and presently the young woman said,

" Do you know who I am ? "

" I supposed you might be a sister of Roa, since you were sitting by the house," said Ruru.

" I am Roa herself," said she, and she told him of the trick she had determined to play on the boasting brothers.

She led him into the house, and time passed gaily, Roa's mother coming soon from the meeting-place, and telling of the doings there.

Before morning Ruru returned to the canoe, and when in the early morning the brothers returned, laughing and jesting, to sleep, there was Ruru lying on the mats in the canoe.

They told him of the doings, and each brother assured him privately that he had already won the heart of Roa.

" There is another also pretending to be Roa," said one brother, " but mine is the real Roa ; she told me so herself, and my brother is being deceived ! "

All the brothers told him the same, and he laughed in his heart to think how it was he himself who had been favoured by the real Roa, and not his elder brothers at all.

Each day the brothers slept, going up to the village again to spend the evenings and nights in pleasure, and in winning the supposed Roa; and each night Ruru-teina went up spending happy hours with the real Roa.

This went on for some days, and at last the brothers decided to return home, each one taking with him as his wife Roa the beauty. On the last evening Ruru asked that the mother of Roa should also come with him to his home, Roa having already agreed to do so; but the mother sent an attendant in her place, and Ruru took these two to the canoe, hiding them in his cabin before the brothers came with their handsome wives.

There was a great leave-taking, and away they sailed; but they forgot to take with them fire to cook food, and the journey would last some days.

Passing a village, they saw smoke arising, so they landed, and sent Ruru-teina to fetch fire. He was unwilling to go, fearing that in his absence Roa and her attendant might be discovered.

His brothers urged him, however, and away he went. He met the brothers Kiore, one

called Ti, the other Ta. He told them what he wanted, and as they spoke together

"Karara wound her tail round Ruru."

Karara came. She was an ogress, her upper half being woman and her lower half serpent. She bade them prepare food, and wound her

tail round Ruru to prevent his going. The food was set before him, but in it were scales from her body, and Ruru felt uneasy.

When she left them Ruru said to the brothers Kiore :

" Who is this woman ? "

" Karara-hu-ara."

" Is she always like this ?—for the food was covered with scales from her body."

" Do you suppose she is a woman ? " said they ; " she is an ogress."

She overheard them, and cried out in anger, coming to punish the brothers.

" You had better hurry away," they said, as one of them hid in a stone, the other in the carved figure at the top of the barge-boards of the house.

The ogress tried to catch Ti and Ta, scratching the stone and the carved figure, and meanwhile Ruru made off as fast as he could.

She saw him hastening away, and called :

" You may run away to-day, Ruru, but I shall catch you again ; on a misty day I shall be with you."

Ruru came to his brothers, and told them of the ogress. They determined to kill her, and built a house so that they might catch

her by stratagem. In the midst of the house they set up a carved figure like a man, and the house had but one window, and no door.

A misty day came, and they heard a voice in the mist,—

"Ruru, Ruru,—where are you?"

When she came nearer, "Here I am," cried Ruru from the house. She entered, and coiled her tail round the carved figure, saying:

"I told you you could not escape me."

Hearing a sound, she asked,

"What are they doing outside?"

"Preparing food for us to eat."

Again she asked, and he made the same reply.

In reality the brothers were piling brushwood against and over the house; to this they set fire, and all was soon in a blaze. Ruru slipped out through the window, fastening it behind him, and Karara was left to be burnt in the house.

"Ruru!" she called; "Ruru, the deceitful one, with the flame of fire."

The house fell in, and she was consumed; and the people stood round, throwing the scales from her body into the fire again as

they sprang out. Two of them escaped to the hills, however, singing as they went.

The brothers paddled away again, and were soon home. One by one they took their wives to their mother, and she was bewildered when first one, then another, told her his wife was the real Roanga-rahia, and that the others had been deceived. They could not all be Roa, but who could say which one really was that beauty?

"Have not you brought a wife?" said the mother to Ruru-teina.

"Yes," said he; "I have brought the real Roa."

The mother was now angry; she was not sure if the elder brothers were jesting with her or not; but when Ruru-teina told her the same, yet no woman was at his side, she felt she had cause for anger.

"Just go to my cabin," said Ruru; "she is still there."

What could she believe?—she was angry, but curious too; might he have someone in his cabin?—and she went, soon hurrying back, crying,—

"You cannot think how lovely is the one in my youngest son's cabin!"

All the people went, and there sat the lovely Roa in tears: she and her attendant had had but two calabashes of birds, and they had been many days on the way.

Soon they had plenty; there was welcome and feasting. Then the elder brothers knew they had been deceived, and their wives found that it was the name of Roa with which their husbands had been in love.

Rata and the Fairy Canoe

Rata and the Fairy Canoe

"Listen to me, Rata," said his mother, "and I will tell you how your father met with his death. It was in the winter season, when the tui is timid, that he sailed away to an island where that bird was to be found in great numbers; but the island belonged to an evil enchanter called Matuku, who caught and killed your father."

"Was Matuku punished?" asked Rata.

"Who would dare punish him?" said his mother; "for he is a fierce man, dwelling with those sea-sprites called Pona-turi, who also are fierce, and many in number. The way to the island is also full of danger, for the sea, the home of monsters and evil beings, must first be crossed."

"But if my father dared venture to obtain birds, surely there were men brave enough to venture to punish Matuku?"

"Yet they never ventured. You are still young, or you would understand that the

perils are so great that no man need be ashamed to fear them."

"Was my father then the bravest of them all?"

"No one was his equal in daring," said his mother; "and you are his son."

"And I feel as if I myself must go to punish this Matuku:—in what direction does the island lie?"

"It lies towards the place where the sun rises from the sea;—but how can you venture who have no canoe?—or how can you succeed when you are so young?"

"A canoe can be built, and a young man can be a warrior."

"That is true; but you have no axe with which to fell the tree and shape the canoe."

"I shall go to my relative Kahue, who can make such axes. I shall tell him my reasons, and he will not refuse me."

Rata set out on his journey, traversing a wide plain, and after some days he reached the home of Kahue, who at once promised to help him. From a large block of stone he hewed a piece, roughly fashioned it, and lashed it to a handle. Rata was pleased

to have the axe, but said as he took it, " It has no edge ; it is quite blunt."

" That is true," said Kahue ; " but when you reach your home, go to your relative Hine-hoanga, and say to her, ' Kahue gave me this axe, and bids you sharpen it for me so that I may cut down a tree and build a canoe.' "

Rata did as he was bidden, and Hine bent down, saying, " Lay the edge of the axe on my back, Rata."

He did so, and at once he heard the sound of words that seemed to say kia-koa, kia-koa, kia-koa, which means Be sharp, be sharp, be sharp. These are the very words the hone says to the scythe when it is used by the mower ; and when Rata lifted the axe from the back of Hine, he found that its edge was keen.

He was delighted ; and thanking his relative he went off to his mother. Showing her the axe, he said,

" Now it only remains to find a tree ; and already in fancy I see the canoe filled with eager warriors sailing on the flashing water-road."

The heart of the mother was glad when she saw the boldness of the father again living in the son, and she described to Rata a valley where, in the bush close to the sea, a high totara grew. You would suppose that it would be no easy matter for a great tree to be felled with a stone axe ; but the father of Rata was a hero, and the son of a hero is able to do what other men cannot do. Standing beside the tree, Rata made four cuts at it ; and although the trunk could hardly be encircled by three men joining hands, at the fifth blow the tree fell. With as great ease he lopped the top and the branches ; and the day being almost over, he turned homewards, intending to return next day to shape the canoe.

" Did you find the tree ? " asked his mother.

" Yes," said Rata ; " I have cut it down, and to-morrow I shall shape the canoe."

Off he went next morning ; but coming to the place where the log lay, he looked for it in vain ; there was no log to be seen. Had he come to the wrong valley ?—No ; he remembered this tree and that tree ;—and there before him, too, stood the very

"There before him stood the very tree he thought he had cut down."

tree he thought he had cut down. It was growing as before; not a cut on its thick ragged bark, and not a chip or broken branch on the ground.

He thought he must have dreamt of cutting it down; so taking his axe, again he made four blows, and at the fifth the tree fell. He lopped the top and branches, and went home as before.

He told his mother how he had found the tree growing which he thought he had cut down;—"Either there is magic," said he, "or I dreamed of felling the tree."

"Then you must have slept like an idle young man," said his mother; "for you were away the whole day."

"I am sure I did not sleep the whole day," said he.

He set out in the morning, wondering if the log would be where he left it, or if it would all prove a dream as before. As he walked beneath the great ferns, and along beautiful groves of nikau-palms, he saw a flock of whiteheads, fluttering along, and singing a noisy chattering song. He remembered that it was unlucky to be watched by this bird; he also remembered that whilst

he was chopping the tree flocks of them had appeared, whistling away, and had noisily left again after seeing what he was doing. Had they told Tane, lord of the forests, that one of his trees was being destroyed ?

Rata hurried on ; and on reaching the valley he was first surprised, then angry, to see that the tree again stood upright. He looked up the rough trunk, and noticed that the bark appeared broken here and there as if with the cut of an axe ; and the bark on trees now growing appears cut in the same way.

" It may have been cut down by others, too," thought he, " and those are the marks of their axes " ; but again he grew angry at the thought of all his wasted labour.

Again he cut down the tree ; and a thought struck him ;—he would pretend to go away, but would return and hide in the bushes, so that he might see if any man came after he left.

He did so ; and lying under a thicket of prickly-leafed bush-lawyer, he waited. The sun was sinking, the birds were beginning their evening song, and he felt a soft wind blowing under the trees, nodding the delicate

little ferns around him, and slowly waving the large upright fronds of the silver tree-fern. Then he heard a humming, a murmuring, as if the voice of the wind were whispering ; but he could not say if the voice came from the right or from the left. The voice swelled and became gentle voices ; they were not so shrill as bird-song, but sweeter ; not so loud as the bubbling of streams or the murmur of distant waterfalls, but as clearly heard ;—and he could not say if the voices came from behind him, or from before. The voices came nearer and nearer ;—then suddenly he saw a flock of little creatures hovering in the air over the log of the tree. He did not see them come, yet suddenly they were there. They were not human beings, though they sang, nor birds, though they flew. These were the words of their song, hardly louder than the humming of insects, yet perfectly clear :

It is Rata ; it is Rata ;
In the forest he has entered,
Cut the tree of sacred Tane.
Fly together ; fly together ;
Stand up tree, with leaves and branches,
Fly up chips and find your places,
Grow again the tree of Tane.

A wonder!—the log moved, the branches moved, the chips moved; each found its place, and Rata saw the tree slowly rising and standing again where it stood before.

At first he could not move for surprise; but soon in anger he sprang to his feet;—and rushing from his hiding-place he seized some of the little creatures as they flew round and round the tree.

"How dare you touch the tree that Rata has felled?"

They were afraid, and answered,—"You cut down the tree, it is true; but the tree belongs to Tane, the guardian of the forests, and he has set us to watch his trees and protect them from injury, for they are his children."

"It is true," said Rata, letting them go; "Tane was right to send you, and I was wrong to be angry. I shall make offerings to Tane, so that I may be allowed to fell a tree for a canoe"; and he told them the reasons for his wishing to do so.

"If you do that," said the little creatures, "all will be well." They fluttered away, leaving Rata alone in the forest.

He looked at the great tree, and thought of what the little guardians had said. He also noticed that the tops of the young supplejacks were bent over, hanging loosely downwards; the fronds of the ponga and other great tree-ferns were drooping; the long leaves of the toe-toe growing here and there, instead of growing upright as before now bent their tips quite close to the ground. These plants, seeing Rata rush out and seize the flying creatures, had bent in fear;—and they still bend, as if the memory of that day had not passed away.

Rata returned to his home, and told his mother of the strange things that had happened. He made offerings to Tane; and all that was required of him was that he should lay the frond of a certain fern on the stump of the felled tree.

Off went Rata, cheerfully prepared to cut down the tree and make it ready for his canoe; but when he reached the valley, he saw a greater wonder than ever. The tree no longer stood where he had left it; but beside the stump lay a canoe, already hewn out, carved, and beautifully finished, ready to float on the water and carry many warriors.

Joyfully Rata called his men together, and with cheery songs they cut a path and hauled the canoe to the sea.

In a few days they were ready, and crossed to the island where Matuku lived. An ogre called Pou also lived there, and he protected Matuku against his enemies.

The friends of Rata had been brave enough when they left home ; but as they neared the island they began to think of the many dreadful things they had heard of Matuku and Pou, and felt afraid. Some even urged Rata to return to his home, remembering that Pou not only devoured men, but their weapons, and the very canoes in which they sailed.

Rata asked them in what way he attacked men.

They answered, " He stamps up and down on the beach, swinging his arms, head down, and eyes glaring while he mutters a powerful charm, saying ' Little heads ! little heads!' when all strength seems to leave the men who have ventured near him, and he at once devours them."

" Do as I tell you," said Rata, " and you need have no fear. I have a charm more powerful than his."

The warriors had great faith in Rata; but when they had drawn the canoe ashore, and saw the ogre approaching,—above all when they heard the mysterious charm, "Little heads! little heads!" they began to feel very much afraid.

"Hark!" they said to Rata; "he is chanting his charm."

Rata heard the words; but he at once replied, "Quickly big face, spread over the sky."

The ogre heard the words; and as the men did not fall down in fear as he expected, he thought this must be some charm more powerful than his own, and he stopped to listen. They approached, and he dared not touch them, asking them instead to visit him in his house. Once there he thought he might do as he wished.

Pou went off; but Rata warned his men not to enter at the door, as Pou would be waiting for that; and as they neared the house, whose walls were made of laced reeds, again they heard the words "Little heads! little heads!"

Rata made an opening in the wall, and he and his men entered through that. Again

Pou was puzzled, and bade his visitors sit on the mats prepared for them.

"Not so," said Rata; "sit on the bare ground."

Pou began to think he would never get the better of these men; all his tricks had failed —and when Rata asked him to fetch him a drink of water, he was glad to go, so that he might think of what to do.

He went to a stream close by; but though he came close to the water, he could not get his calabash into it; no, the water seemed to move away. He stepped closer,—but no, away went the water, and so he went on, stepping and stooping, stepping and stooping, but never seeming to get nearer.

Rata with his magic did this, for he had a reason. He was heating some large stones in the fire; and when they were red-hot, he ceased murmuring his charms, and Pou was able to fill his calabash.

"Here is your water," said he on his return; "but never have I had so much trouble to catch it."

"You must be in need of food," said Rata.

"That is so," said Pou, looking longingly at the men.

"Here then is some we have prepared for you," said Rata.

Pou opened his mouth, and Rata quickly threw in the red-hot stones. The ogre burst in pieces, and there they saw the men, weapons, mats, canoes, and other such things that Pou had swallowed in times past. Now there was left only Matuku.

From Tama, one of the attendants of Pou, they learned that Matuku dwelt deep down in the cave of a hill not far distant, and away they went to the hill. They learned, too, that the father of Rata was not dead, but was kept as a prisoner.

They fixed snares round the mouth of the cave, and then called to Matuku below.

"E—Matuku!" called Tama, using the cry common to the people, and after a time a rumbling reply was heard.

"You are wanted above here," cried Tama.

"For what reason am I wanted at this time?"

"That you may charm the crop of thistles."

They used thistles as a food, but it was not the season for the thistles, and Matuku knew this very well. He was angry, thinking Tama was only playing tricks. "I will not come," they heard him answer; "wait till the kaka tears the rata for honey by day,

and the mutton-bird comes from his sea-side burrow by night;—that is the season, and then I will come."

But Rata leaned forward, and cried as Tama had cried,—

"E!—Matuku!" but Rata added, "here are men for your food and goods for your use."

He turned to his men, bidding them be ready with the snares, for this was certain to bring Matuku from below. So it proved, for they heard the sound of him as he came nearer and nearer; and they heard the words:

Hum!—ha!—yes, I can;
Men I smell, my food is man.

His head appeared, his shoulders; and on Rata giving the word Matuku was caught round the waist by the snares, when Rata rushed forward to attack him.

"You cannot kill me," cried Matuku as Rata cut off an arm.

"You cannot kill me," he cried as Rata cut off the other arm.

He repeated the cry as Rata cut off first one leg, then the other, and as his head was being taken off he still cried "You cannot kill me."

His words were true; for suddenly his body changed into a bird that ran off with a sound as of mocking. That bird is called a bittern by us, but in the language of Rata's people it is known as matuku.

Rata now went down to set free his father, and he and his men hid among the trees near the village where the Pona-turi dwelt, and where his father was a prisoner. In the evening Rata stole out alone to spy on the doings of the people. He saw the wise men of the Pona-turi performing certain ceremonies, and repeating powerful charms. The charms he learned, and then dashed among the wise men, shouting aloud and striking right and left with his weapon.

His men heard him, they came to his assistance, the wise men were dispersed or killed, and Rata set free his father, all hurrying away before the Pona-turi discovered what had happened.

They reached their home, and in the morning Rata from the watch-tower of his fortress looked out over the sea. Far away he saw the canoes of the Pona-turi. They had discovered their loss, and had come to attack the fortress.

Preparations were made to defend the place ; gates were closed, men lay with spears

"Matuku ran off with a sound as of mocking."

behind the tall palisades, and all was ready when from canoe after canoe the Pona-turi

leaped to the beach and with wild cries began the attack.

They climbed the palisades, though many were speared and fell in the deep ditch along the foot ; as one fell another took his place, and so many were they that soon many were within the defences, fighting desperately with the defenders. They struck one another with clubs of stone and of wood ; they thrust with short spears ; they slashed with sword-like weapons of wood and bone.

The Pona-turi were many more in number than the defenders, and one after another the best warriors of Rata were killed, and the enemy penetrated further and further into the fortress. Then Rata remembered the charm he had learned from the wise men of the Pona-turi. He repeated the charm, and a wonderful change took place. The Pona-turi seemed to weaken ; they ceased their wild shouting ; they grew afraid. More ;—the dead warriors sprang to their feet as if from a sleep and fought more vigorously than before, and seeing this the remaining Pona-turi turned and fled.

Some escaped, some were killed, and many lay dead ; but of the warriors of Rata, not a man was even missing.

Tini-rau and his Pet Whale

Tini-rau and his Pet Whale

Tini-rau was a great chief, noted for his handsome appearance. It was not only others who admired him ; like Narcissus of old, he admired his own beauty, and had several pools of clear water set apart as mirrors for his own use. He was not, however, altogether a vain man : he was a brave warrior, and a favourite with his people, and his pastime was the keeping of pet whales, his favourite pet being called Tutu-nui.

Hine, a young woman of rank belonging to a distant tribe, heard of the fame of Tini-rau. Others too heard, and were content to hear ; but Hine desired to see for herself, and determined to go and discover if the reports concerning him were really true or no.

She lived at the side of the sea ; Tini-rau lived on the other side, far away on the island called Motu-tapu. One day Hine was with her women at the sea-side, when she sprang into the water, dived, and swam under water to a rock some distance out. There

she sat for a time, her companions wondering what had become of her, and lamenting her loss when she did not return. But they need have had no fear for her; the sea-deities had given her the power of changing her form, and as she sat on the rocks she appeared to be neither woman, nor fish, but half fish and half woman;—a mermaid, indeed, able to live either in the water or on the land.

She plunged into the water and swam towards Motu-tapu; she met with many adventures, speaking with the shark, the beautiful kahawai, and other fish she met on the way. On reaching the island she entered one of the pools that none but Tini-rau might use, swimming in its water, ruffling its smooth surface, and sitting afterwards on the sunny sands of its margin.

Tini-rau had his watchman;—this was Ruru, a tame morepork; and when Ruru saw Hine swimming and diving in the pool, off he flew to Tini-rau and told him that his pool was being disturbed by a stranger. Tini-rau hastened to the pool, and there he saw the beautiful Hine. She had taken on the form of a woman again, and Tini-rau

"Tini-rau hastened to the pool"

thought he had never seen one more beautiful; and as for Hine, she thought, "Ah; if this is Tini-rau, then report did not speak the truth;—he is far more handsome than ever was told."

They made themselves known to each other; each confessed admiration for the other;—they left the pool, and Hine became the wife of Tini-rau.

The women of the place were, however, jealous of Hine, and when after a time she became a mother they were determined that she should die. With spells they attempted to destroy her, but she had more powerful spells, and defeated their designs. Hine lived there for some time, but becoming weary of the secret persecution of the women, one day she left Motu-tapu and returned with her son to her own home.

Tini-rau missed her, and at once went in search of her. Coming near her home, he saw some children playing among the tall clumps of toe-toe. He hid among the drooping blades, made a noise to attract the attention of the children, and on their approaching him he recognised his son among them. He called him, had a talk with him, and sent

him with a present to his mother,—a little bag, filled with a sweet-scented moss called karamea, which he tied about his neck.

The child went to his mother, and told her of the good-looking man who had spoken to him, and sent her a present. Hine at once recognised the bag; it was a present she herself had given to Tini-rau in the days of their first love, and her heart longed again for her lover. She hastened to see him, for she was certain it could be no one but her husband. They greeted, and she took him to the village, where he was welcomed by her people as an honoured guest.

He remained with them for some time, and a season of scarcity came;—the people were almost without food. Tini-rau bade them remain within their houses, and he would obtain for them a supply of food. He uttered a powerful incantation, and the people in the houses heard a loud sound like the rushing of a wind. The sound continued through the night, and in the morning, when Tini-rau bade them come out, they found the whole village full of all kinds of fish, piled as high as the raised store-houses.

After a time Tini-rau returned to Motutapu, Hine and her son accompanying him. Tini-rau wished his son to be named, and requested Kae, a tohunga of power, to perform the ceremonies. They were completed, and Kae prepared to return to his home. The way was by sea, and instead of going by canoe he requested Tini-rau, as a favour, to lend him Tutu-nui, so that he might ride home on the back of the whale.

Tini-rau was unwilling to lend his pet; but as Kae had done him a good service he could not very well refuse. He warned him, however, saying,—"When Tutu-nui approaches the shore, he will shake himself when he is in shallow water; then you must leave him, and wade ashore." Kae promised to do so, and away he went on the back of the whale.

On Tutu-nui shaking himself, however, Kae, forgetting all about his promise, urged the whale nearer and nearer to the shore, until at last it was stranded, and quite unable to return to the deep water. It perished; and Kae, far from feeling remorse, thought it a shame that so much good food should be wasted. He caused a huge earth-

oven to be prepared, and roasted the whale with great piles of koromiko. The fat soaked the leaves, so that even to this day, when koromiko is burnt, the fat may be seen oozing from the leaves.

Tini-rau waited at Motu-tapu for the return of his pet,—but Tutu-nui did not return. Then Tini-rau caught a fragrance in the breeze; he stood still, and snuffed the air,—and a sad thought entered his mind and darkened his heart :—" It is the smell of roasted whale that is carried to me on the breeze ;—Kae has been treacherous, and has killed Tutu-nui."

He called two of his sisters, and told them he wished them to go and find Kae, and bring him back with them to be punished. " You will know him," he said to them, " by this mark ; he has lost two of his front teeth, and is ashamed to open his mouth for fear of ridicule ;—but make him laugh, and his lost teeth will betray him."

The sisters took with them several young women, all expert in the arts of singing, and dancing, and playing games, and they went from village to village, amusing the people, till not a village but wished for the

appearance of the sisters and their friends. In this way they came nearer and nearer to the village where the unsuspecting Kae had his home.

The sisters took pet birds with them, which flew above them as they travelled. Over each village the birds uttered a short cry and went on, but the young women stayed a short time in each village, dancing and singing, and then following the birds. At the village where Kae lived the birds cried and stayed, so the sisters knew that Kae was there. He had built a new house; and whilst the young women were making merry in the village the sisters sent a design of the house to Tini-rau, so that he might build one exactly like it before their return.

They sang songs; they danced haka; they made the string-figures called whai. The people were delighted; but the man they thought was Kae refused to laugh though all of the others were filled with merriment. At last beating time with a musically-sounding rod called pakuru, they sang a haka so humorous that even Kae must laugh;—and sure enough, there was the gap left by

the lost teeth, so they were sure they had found the man they sought.

The sisters then sang a song inducing sleep, and one by one the people nodded, and sank into deep slumber; even Kae, though loth to close his eyes, was soon sleeping as soundly as the others. Wrapped in his mats, the young women laid Kae in a litter and carried him to their canoe, paddling off with him to their home.

Tini-rau had built a house according to the design sent him by his sisters, and in this house Kae was laid down, still sleeping soundly. When he awoke, Tini-rau came in at the door; and Kae, supposing himself to be in his own village, expressed surprise to see Tini-rau.

"Well, Kae," said Tini-rau, "where are you?"

"In my own house, to be sure," said Kae, looking about him and seeing everything familiar.

Tini-rau laughed; and again he said, "Well, Kae, where are you?"

Kae looked out at the door; he saw the landscape;—it was not that of his own village; it was that of the village of Tini-rau.

He then knew he had been trapped, and bending his head he commenced a sorrowful tangi.

"Ha!" said Tini-rau, hearing his lamenting; "did Tutu-nui cry like that when his flesh was cut by you?"

Then Kae knew his fate;—the thing he had done to Tutu-nui, that would now be done to him.

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